REMARKS

I.   Introduction

Claims 1-17, 37-54, 56-59, 67, 69-70, and 74-80 are pending in the application and are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,324,541 to de l'Etraz (hereinafter "de l'Etraz") in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,003,546 to Cheah (hereinafter "Cheah"). Claims 1, 37, 54, and 67 are amended. Support for the claim amendments is found in the original specification generally at paragraph 10, 46, 55-56, 61, and elsewhere throughout the specification, drawings, and original claims. With these changes, the applicants respectfully submit that all of the remaining claims are now in condition for allowance.

II.   Rejection of claims 1, 37, 54, 67 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

A.   U.S. Patent No. 6,324,541 to de l'Etraz

De l'Etraz discloses a data mining system for identifying contact pathways between individuals and various entities, such as corporate boards of directors, alumni organizations, social clubs, and the like. De l'Etraz discloses a first private database for storing private contact information, and a second public database storing publicly available information about individuals and organizations. The data stored in the second public database, however, does not include contact files having contact data in common with unique contact files stored in the first private database. Because the second public database does not store common contact data with the first public database, there is no cause for reconciling the data stored in the two databases. As stated in the Action, de l'Etraz does not disclose an administration routine as recited in claims 1, 37, 54, and 67.

B.   U.S. Patent No. 7,003,546 to Cheah

Cheah discloses a method and system for distributing contact information over a network in a controlled manner and further discloses automatically updating previously-distributed contact information. For example, Cheah generally discloses exchanging contact information among users' machines through a server that receives a request for another user's contact information from a particular user. The disclosed server determines which user's contact information is being requested, forwards the request to that machine, then queries the requested user to determine if distribution of contact information to the requester is desired by the requested user or is to be made according to certain limitations. (Col. 19, line 62 - col. 20, line 10). If the requested user desires that his or her information be distributed to the requestor, Cheah also generally discloses that the server machine forwards the contact information to the requester machine through the network. If distribution of the requested contact information is not permitted, then Cheah generally discloses that the server sends a message to the requester machine indicating that the request has been denied.

Cheah also generally discloses managing updates of the previously-exchanged contact information after a user modifies his or her own personal data. Upon alteration, Cheah discloses that the change is <u>automatically</u> propagated to the users that previously received the now-altered data. (Col. 23, lines 40-47).

In sum, Cheah generally discloses exchanging personal contact information according to optional limitations and automatically propagating any changes to the previously-exchanged information after a user changes his or her personal contact information.

C.   Claims 1, 37, 54, and 67

In contrast to the disclosures of de l'Etraz in view of Cheah, the recitations of some of the presently pending claims generally recite a relationship management system that

initiates update processing upon detecting a modification of contact information using an administration routine and a change management routine.

As generally recited in amended claims 1, 37, 54, and 67, the administration routine detects a change to contact information and classifies the change as one or more of add, edit, delete, format change, and suspect change, and sends a message including the classified change to either an administrator of the system or an administrator interface. As further recited in the amended claims, a change management routine receives a response to the message and processes the response by approving, rejecting, or following up on the change.

Neither de l'Etraz nor Cheah disclose the recitations of amended claims 1, 37, 54, and 67. Rather, as previously discussed, de l'Etraz discloses nothing about common data between two databases and Cheah merely discloses managing an initial exchange of contact information from one user to another through "limitations." Further, Cheah discloses automatically forwarding changes to users that had previously requested the now-changed information. Upon alteration, Cheah discloses that the change is automatically propagated to the users that previously received the now-altered data. The difference between the disclosure of Cheah and the recitations of amended claims 1, 37, 54, and 67 is significant. Specifically, the automatic forwarding of changed contact information disclosed by Cheah will not allow a change management routine to approve, reject, or follow-up on the change based on a response to the changed information as recited in amended claims 1, 37, 54, and 67. In sum, Cheah discloses automatic change forwarding, and simply does not disclose managing contact information changes with the degree of control permitted by the administration routine and the change management routine as recited in amended claims 1, 37, 54, and 67. Because neither de l'Etraz nor Cheah alone or in combination teach or suggest the recitations of amended claims 1, 37, 54, and 67, these claims, and claims 2-17, 38-53, 56-59, 69-70, and 74-80 depending therefrom, are also allowable.

III.   Conclusion

In view of the above amendment and arguments, the applicant submits the pending application is in condition for allowance, and such action is requested at the examiner's earliest opportunity. The examiner is encouraged to contact the applicant's undersigned attorney with any questions regarding this response or the application as a whole at the telephone number indicated below. If there are any additional fees or refunds required, the Commissioner is directed to charge or debit Deposit Account No. 13-2855.

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Respectfully submitted,

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